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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT Tuesday, June 9, 1931.

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Subject: "Window Boxes." Information approved by the Bureau of Plant Industry.

Bulletin available: "House Ants."

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"My sakes," exclaimed Cousin Susan, in a very loud voice as she swept the front porch. ("Piazza," she calls it.) "My sakes. Ebenezer hasn't gotten at those window boxes yet. Seems to me it was last Christmas that we began to ask to have that little job done."

Uncle Ebenezer, who was inside peacefully reading his paper, looked up with a most injured expression on his face.

"I have been planning all along to put up those boxes this very afternoon. I really don't see why women in the household always have to be in such a rush about things. It's early for box gardens yet."

I refrained from replying that opinions differed in this matter of rush; also that some women I know who happen to have prompt husbands already have phlox in bloom in their boxes. There are lots of things I refrain from saying on certain occasions. Sometimes silent pictures seem to be so much more effective than talkies.

And to do justice to Uncle Ebenezer, let me tell you now that right after lunch he really did go out and fix a nice box under each of my three front windows.

I don't know who first invented the idea of these little gardens growing in boxes. But it was certainly a happy idea, especially for people whose garden space is limited and who enjoy a gay cheer that growing flowers--even a few of them--provide. As a decorative note for a bare spot along the edge of the porch as well as under any window, upstairs or down, hey are most helpful.

I have a friend who planted the box outside her kitchen window to harmonize with the kitchen color scheme which was apple green and soft yellow. The same colors were repeated in the flowers bobbing outside the window as those in the crisp curtains inside.

What wood is the best to use for window boxes? Seasoned cypress is the very best. Why? Because it is very resistant to decay and is much more durable than woods of softer grain. Now when you start building the boxes, be sure to use screws instead of nails, as they do not pull out so easily. Then reinforce the corners with angle irons. Small holes should

be cut in the bottom of the box for drainage purposes. If you build the box well, it should last for many years.

Second question. What soil should be put in? Where plants have only a limited quantity of soil from which to draw their nourishment, as in the case of the potted plants or flowers grown in window boxes, they need special care in this matter of soil. A good mixture is 2 parts of good garden loam, 1 part well rotted manure and 1 part of sand. Before putting in this soil mixture, spread a layer of coarse material on the bottom in order to insure adequate drainage. Small stones or broken flower pots will do. Then put some moss, grass clippings or fiberous soil to keep the soil from clogging the spaces between the broken crocks, above this. Fill up the box with the soil.

For city dwellers, prepared stock yard cattle or sheep manure could be used for the rotted manure.

Now we come to planting. Oh, no. Just a second. My Neighbor wants that soil mixture repeated to take down in her notebook. All right.

2 parts of good garden loam
1 part sand
1 part well-rotted manure.

What plants to grow in the boxes?

Geraniums are great favorites because they are hardy and come in such bright, cheerful colors. Then other good choices are, heliotrope, petunias, marguerites and sweet alyssium. Hills of snow is an excellent dwarf compact variety. Begonias can also be used in shaded boxes. In poor soil plant pinks, verbenas, mignonette and dwarf nasturtium.

Of course, color combinations have to be planned ahead of time to get the best effects. Such annuals as ageratum, browalia, lobelia, phlox and snap-dragons may also be used with a good deal of success. For green color and trailing vines to give a soft and graceful look to the box, there are wandering jew and vinca. English ivy and some of the daintier members of the ivy family are also useful for this purpose and grow very rapidly.

We have just time to answer one question. It is about house ants. "Dear Aunt Sammy, Please tell me how to rid my kitchen of little red ants. They settle all over food almost as soon as I put it in the pantry. They seem to like sweet things and bacon especially."

Some day soon I mean to take time for a real chat on house and garden ants. In the meantime let me tell you that what you need is a-- you're right-- a bulletin. There is one called "House Ants--Kinds and Methods of Control", which will give you details in dealing with these pests.

I'll read you a paragraph or two from the bulletin:

"The surest way to keep a house free from ants is to leave no food lying about on shelves or in open places where they can reach it. Ants go where they can find food, and if the food supplies of the household are kept in anti-proof metal containers or in ice boxes, and if all food that may

happen to be scattered by children or others is cleaned up promptly, the ant nuisance will be slight. Cake, bread, sugar, meat and like substances are especially attractive to ants and should be kept from them.

"Methods of killing ants with poisoned baits, and of attracting them to sweetened baits, and afterward destroying them, may be used also, though these methods are most effective when the colonies are few and small."

And, as I said, the bulletin will tell you about the kinds of ants that live about houses and lawns. It will also tell you about their habits, the baits to use in luring them to their destruction, and other methods of combating them.

Tomorrow; we'll have a menu for the children and we'll talk about choosing the right playthings for them.